

# Take Action

FOR YOUR FAMILY'S MENTAL HEALTH

## Reaching Out for Support



Take  
Action

FOR MENTAL HEALTH

### INCLUDES:

- A spiritual leader's advice for mental wellness
- Tips for getting mental health support from your community
- Fun games & activities for the whole family

This story is part of a series to help you understand mental health and wellness for your family and community. When you and your family members can talk openly about your feelings, you can support each other in staying mentally healthy. Read the story and play the games together to learn how.

We all go through mental health challenges in life and need help sometimes. When that happens, **it's time to take action for mental health.**

Here's what you can do:

### CHECK IN

- Check in on your own mental health regularly to see if your feelings or actions are telling you there might be a problem
- Check in with your family and friends to see how you can support them

### LEARN MORE

- Understand how to take care of your own mental health
- Learn about mental health warning signs and symptoms
- Find out the different types of mental health services and supports

### GET SUPPORT

- Use self care methods to take care of your own mental health
- Reach out to your family, friends and/or trusted individuals (for e.g. teacher, your medical doctor, community worker, priest) for help
- Join a peer support group or call a warm line
- Make an appointment with your doctor or therapist

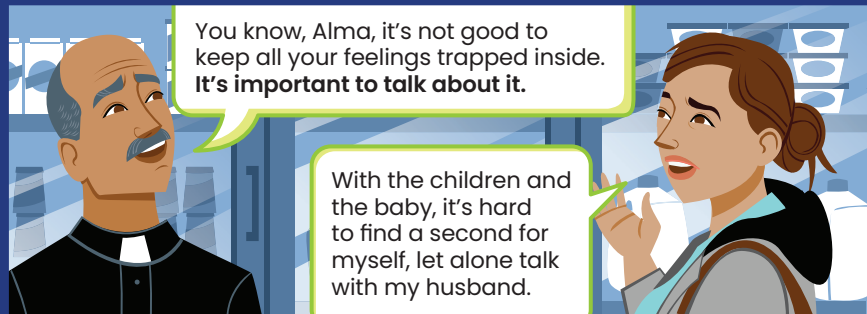
The **Take Action for Mental Health** campaign is a project of the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES,  
GO TO [www.TakeAction4MH.com](http://www.TakeAction4MH.com).**



Funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63)

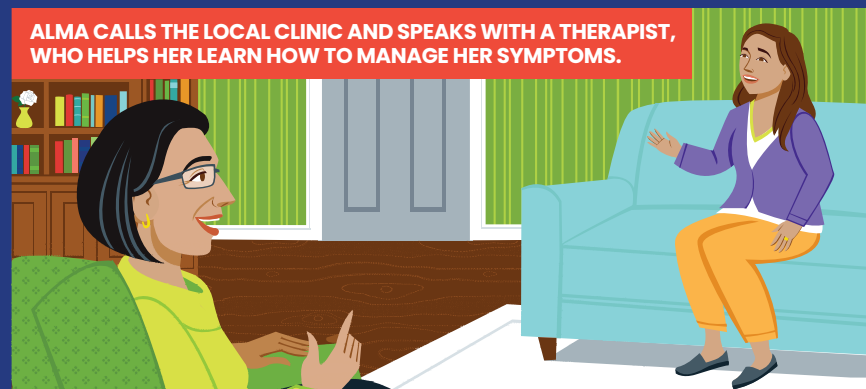




BACK AT HOME, ALMA FEELS OVERWHELMED BY EVERYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE AND BEGINS TO RECOGNIZE THAT SHE CAN'T FACE HER PROBLEMS ALONE.



Get support for your mental health when you need it.  
**Your trusted community members can help.**





Alma! It's great to see you and your family at service today.

**A FEW MONTHS LATER, ALMA AND HER FAMILY ARE EXITING SUNDAY SERVICE WHERE THEY ARE GREETED BY FATHER VICTOR.**

Thank you Father, it's good to be here.

Father, I can't thank you enough for recommending that Alma see a therapist. **It's been very helpful for her and for all of us.**

Yes, we are all grateful for your guidance, Father.

I'm glad you are doing what is needed to **take care of yourselves and one another.**



## Wellness Wisdom

**from Dr. Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, M.D., Ph.D.**

Director, UC Davis Center for Reducing Health Disparities,  
Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine

### **Q: Why is mental health important?**

**A:** Our mental health supports our thinking and feeling, our mood, our ability to relate to others and to function in daily life. Sometimes we experience mental health challenges that disrupt our mental health, which take the form of medical illnesses like depression, anxiety or eating disorders.

### **Q: How common are mental illnesses?**

**A:** Just like physical illnesses, mental illnesses are very common and nothing to be ashamed of. Research shows 1 in 5 Latino adults are living with a diagnosable mental illness in any given year. So, it's almost certain that someone in your family needs your support.

### **Q: Can mental illnesses be treated?**

**A:** Yes. With appropriate support and treatment, people can improve their symptoms and live happy, full and productive lives.

### **Q: Is there anything I can do to help if a friend or family member's mental health is suffering?**

**A:** Yes. Be supportive and encourage the person to see a doctor or counselor. Remind them that there is hope. Speak and act from a place of compassion and acceptance, rather than fear.

### **Q: How can I support my family's mental health?**

**A:** To support mental health and prevent mental illness, pay attention to triggers like stress and warning signs such as trouble sleeping or mood swings. Get routine medical care, and seek mental health care when you need it. Finally, take good care of yourself: good sleep, healthy eating and regular physical activity are important to mental health and physical health.

# Have a Check-In Chat!

You might notice that a family member, friend, or someone you know is having a hard time. Maybe you see them regularly or maybe you haven't spoken with them in a while. Either way...

## Have a Check-In Chat!

In the story about Alma, she runs into her priest at the grocery store. He hasn't seen her at services lately and has noticed she seems down. He takes the time to ask how she's doing—and then to really listen. This is an example of a Check-In Chat.

A Check-In Chat is a great way to ask if someone needs some support for their mental health. And to let them know you care about them and are there if they need you.

The good news is that talking about mental health gets easier the more you do it.



If you want to check in with someone you care about but aren't sure what to say, **here are some ideas for how to start the conversation...**

How have you been feeling?

Seems like something is bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?

I haven't seen you in a while. I miss you. What's going on?

I'm worried about you because...

I care about you. How can I help?

One of your recent social media posts left me feeling concerned... I want to make sure you are ok.

Listen to what they have to say. Let them know you're there to support them and that they are not alone. Check in with them again in the future to see how they are doing.

In Alma's story, her priest starts a Check-In Chat, which uncovers some of Alma's struggles. As a result, Alma sees a therapist, which helps both her and her family. While Check-In Chats may not always help right away, they show you are paying attention and that you care, which makes a difference.

# GET SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT

Everyone has times in life when they feel stressed, anxious, or sad. After a while, things may change and you'll feel better. But if the feelings don't go away, it's time to get support for your mental health.

**If you are struggling, it can be hard to know how to start getting help.**

Reaching out and sharing our feelings with someone we trust is the first step toward feeling better.

**If you ignore your feelings or problems, things might even get worse.**

You are not alone. Think about who you can turn to for support.

**Your friends and family can help.**

They can listen when you need to talk. They can provide encouragement or advice if you want it. Or they might help with things like finding treatment or rides to appointments.

**Other trusted people in your life can help.**

Try to stay connected with other people instead of just keeping to yourself. Reach out to community leaders like your faith leader, a health promotora or peer supporter, a counselor or teacher at school, or your doctor. They can often provide a safe space for sharing your feelings.

**For many people, speaking with a therapist or other mental health professional is beneficial.** It gives you the opportunity to explore your thoughts, feelings, and patterns of behaviors in a private and safe way. It can also help you learn new coping skills and techniques to better manage daily stressors or symptoms associated with your mental health. However, because you may need to wait for an appointment, go ahead and get it on the calendar now.

**Peer support can help.** In addition to, or while you're waiting to get in with a professional, you can benefit from peer support. This might be in person or in an online group. Talking with people who have had problems like yours can help you feel like you're not alone. They can give you ideas that worked for them or share helpful resources.

**Whatever you decide to do, take action to get the support you need.**



# Talking about Feelings

Getting to know our feelings can be one of the most confusing parts of growing up. In fact, many of us adults haven't quite figured them out for ourselves yet! Feelings guide our thoughts and actions, so getting to know them is very important.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Everyone has feelings.** Some of us try to hide them, but they are always here inside.

**Feelings are always changing.** Sometimes we are sad. Other times we are happy. Usually, a sad feeling will be replaced by a happy feeling in time.

**Our feelings — and other people's feelings — are true for each of us in this moment.** Even if we feel good, we can still accept that our friend or family member might not feel good at the same time. We cannot force ourselves or others to feel a certain way.

**If sad feelings stick around too long, we can turn to someone we trust for support.** This may be a family member, a friend, a faith leader, a counselor or a doctor.

**Talking about feelings is good for our health.** It feels good to talk about feeling good and being happy. It may not be so easy to talk about feeling sad, hurt, lonely or stressed, but talking about these feelings is the first step to feeling better.

**When we try to hide our feelings or keep them inside, they don't go away.** They get stronger and stronger over time. They start to take control over our words and actions, even when we don't want them to. By trying to ignore our feelings, we actually give them more power. They can even make us sick! It's better to let them out by talking about them with people we trust.

**There are many ways to talk about feelings. Some are helpful, others are hurtful.**

### HELPFUL

Use sentences that start with "I feel"

Make observations: "The dirty laundry is on the floor."

Name your feelings, and be specific: "I feel frustrated when I see clothes on the floor."

Express your needs: "I have a need for the house to be tidy, and for everyone to help."

Make a request: "Would you be willing to pick up your clothes in the next five minutes?"

### HURTFUL

"You make me feel" or "Because of you"

Make judgments: "How did I raise such a messy child?"

Make others responsible for your feelings: "It makes me so mad when you don't pick up after yourself."

Repress your needs: "No one cares about what I want anyway."

Make a demand: "Pick up your clothes or no dinner for you tonight!"

**Here are ways to be helpful — not hurtful — when someone is sharing their feelings with us.**

### HELPFUL

Listen with attentiveness

Be respectful

Show support and compassion

Acknowledge feelings with "oh" or "I see"

With young children, give a name to the feeling to help them understand it

### HURTFUL

Interrupt or tell our own story

Give advice or try to "fix" the feelings

Criticize or blame

Deny or ignore feelings

Label feelings as bad, or tell a child they should not feel them

# Information & Services

If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available to assist you.



## Take Action for Mental Health [www.TakeAction4MH.com](http://www.TakeAction4MH.com)

As part of California's ongoing mental health movement, the *Take Action for Mental Health* campaign helps you check in, learn more, and get support for your own mental health or the mental health of someone who needs help. Start taking action with the information and tools at [www.TakeAction4MH.com](http://www.TakeAction4MH.com).

The site includes a directory of **resources and support options available locally**, including help lines, warm lines, and contact information for your nearest behavioral health services at [www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now](http://www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now).



## Directing Change [www.DirectingChangeCA.org](http://www.DirectingChangeCA.org)

The Directing Change Program engages students and young people throughout California to learn about the topics of suicide prevention and mental health by creating short films and art projects.



## SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration) National Helpline [www.SAMHSA.gov](http://www.SAMHSA.gov) 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Call SAMHSA's National Helpline for 24/7, free, and confidential treatment referral and information services in English and Spanish for people and families facing mental and/or substance use issues.

If you or someone you know needs help, there are resources available to assist you.

Pain Isn't Always Obvious



[suicideispreventable.org](http://suicideispreventable.org)

## Know the Signs [www.SuicidelsPreventable.org](http://www.SuicidelsPreventable.org) 1-800-273-8255

The *Know the Signs* campaign aims to help Californians recognize the warning signs of suicide and support a loved one by finding the words to ask directly about suicide and reaching out to resources.



## 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline [www.988lifeline.org](http://www.988lifeline.org) 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Spanish: 1-888-628-9454

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



## CalHOPE Connect [www.calhopeconnect.org](http://www.calhopeconnect.org)

CalHOPE Connect live chat connects you with trained, supportive peers when you need to talk with someone.

To search for more local services online, visit:  
[www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now](http://www.TakeAction4MH.com/find-help-now)





# Games!

**MATCH the feelings with the face!**

1. Angry

2. Sad

3. Happy

4. Silly

5. Tired

6. Worried

7. Surprised

8. Scared

9. Excited

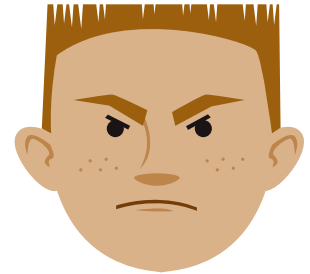
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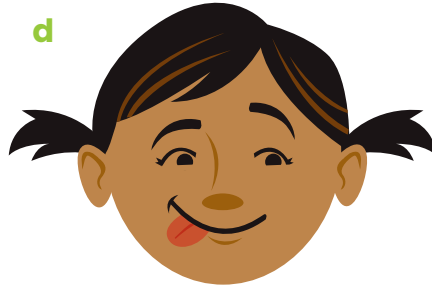
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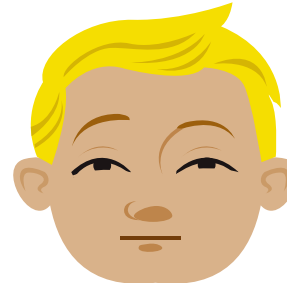
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d



e



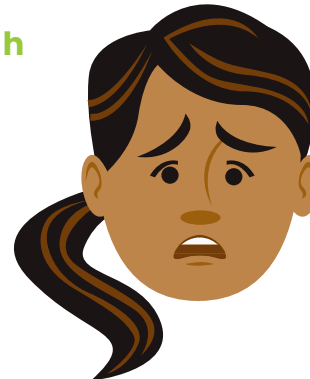
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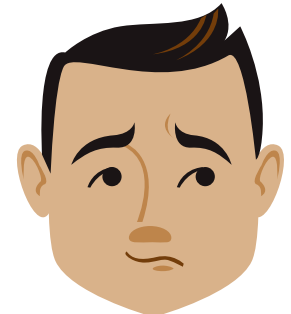
g



h



i



Answers: 1) c 2) b 3) a 4) d 5) e 6) i 7) g 8) h 9) f

# More Games!

**FIND these words in the puzzle:**

**FAMILY  
FEELINGS  
FRIEND  
HAPPY**

**HEALTHY  
MAD  
SAD  
SCHOOL**

**SMILE  
TALK**

M N Z S W X I X P Z R U U C K  
V A Y M N C W D Q Y K W P U C  
I F R I E N D J P V T D C L P  
S I J L P B E P K A B A O Q P  
A X P E N L A Y I P U O L E Y  
A B V E W H Y W B Q H R F K Q  
Z F I A P F F Q A C E I A W G  
X J E L M A D E S N J H M I Z  
Z H B R J V J G E M B P I T N  
D E A K I I M G K L G N L K Y  
Z A T E S F V Y B S I G Y H U  
M L D F A O N G R X H N B I C  
X T J D D V H Y X I H A G F W  
X H U I V A D P W N V M O S V  
H Y A P W X F G R Q H M X F Y

## NAME THAT FEELING!

Cut out each word and put them all in a bag. Each family member will select one word from the bag and silently act out the feeling that word represents using body and facial expressions. Whoever names the correct feeling gets a point! Continue until all feelings are named and add up points to find the winner.



**Angry**

**Happy**

**Excited**

**Frustrated**

**Disappointed**

**Nervous**

**Shy**

**Bored**

**Hopeful**

**Afraid**

**Sad**

**Jealous**

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